

## **TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS: BLIND OR LOW VISION (Visually Impaired, Deaf Blind)**

**Note:** Performance, knowledge, or disposition statements in *italics* represent standards that are unique to teachers of students with blind or low vision.

### **Standard #1: FOUNDATIONS**

**Educators of students with exceptional needs understand the field of special education as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues.**

#### **Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. articulates the benefits, strengths, and constraints of special education services.
2. communicates and models a philosophy of special education that embodies advocacy and self-reflection.
3. conducts educational and other professional activities in compliance with federal, state and district laws, policies and procedures.
4. recognizes the impact of differences in values, customs and language in establishing respectful, productive relationships with students, families, and colleagues.
5. accesses professional resources to remain current on state and federal regulations and evidence-based practices regarding special education services and procedures.
6. *recognizes the impact of dual sensory impairment.*

#### **Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. understands the theories and philosophies that provide the basis for special education.
2. understands how factors in the student's environment, such as beliefs, traditions, and values, vary across cultures and affect relationships between and among students, families, schools, and communities.
3. understands state and federal regulations, local level policies and procedures, and due process requirements as they relate to assessment, eligibility, and placement of students with exceptional needs.

4. knows the rights and responsibilities of parents, students, educators, and other professionals as they relate to students with exceptional needs.
5. understands the concepts of free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) and least restrictive environment (LRE).
6. *knows basic terminology related to the structure and function of the human visual system and how diseases and disorders affect visual functioning.*
7. *understands the educational implications of federal entitlements, how funding is generated, and how this relates to the provision of specialized materials and equipment.*
8. *possesses in-depth knowledge of the variances in the medical, federal, and state definitions of visual impairment, identification criteria, labeling issues, incidence and prevalence figures, and how each interacts with eligibility determinations for services.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. respects the historical and philosophical framework of special education.
2. respects diversity among students and families.
3. values evidence-based techniques and strategies.
4. *respects the historical foundations of educating individuals who are blind or have low vision.*

**Standard #2: DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARNERS**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs is knowledgeable of human growth and development and uses this knowledge to provide meaningful learning opportunities.**

**Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. uses knowledge of how children develop and learn to provide learning experiences that support the physical, social, emotional, communicative, and cognitive development of all students.
2. *integrates knowledge of the visual impairment and developmental progression when designing and implementing communication and social skills instruction.*
3. *integrates ophthalmological and optometric low vision and functional vision evaluation information to comprehensively design strategies as part of an individualized education programs.*

4. *possesses an in depth understanding of how a visual impairment impacts development and learning.*

### **Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. understands typical and atypical human growth and development.
2. understands variances in developmental progressions and the uniqueness of each individual.
3. knows the educational implications of various disabilities, including sensory, cognitive, communication, physical, emotional, and health impairments.
4. understands the effects of various medications on student performance.
5. *understands the terminology related to diseases and disorders of the human visual system, their impact on language, cognitive, and psycho-social development, and how various medications impact the visual and cognitive systems.*
6. *understands how secondary senses develop when vision is impaired.*

### **Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. respects the unique talents of all learners.
2. values using students' strengths as a basis for growth.
3. *appreciates the variations in functional capabilities and diverse implications various eye diseases have on growth and development.*
4. *respects the impact of vision loss on psychosocial skills.*

### **Standard #3: INDIVIDUAL LEARNING DIFFERENCES**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs has an in-depth understanding of the unique characteristics and specialized needs of students and the implications for academic, social, and emotional planning necessary to support continuous skill development and to maximize independence throughout life.**

### **Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. identifies learning styles, motivation styles, strengths and challenges of each student.
2. develops relationships with the learner's family to gain awareness of cultural beliefs and values, and to support realistic outcomes.
3. utilizes knowledge of individual students to design and implement purposeful, meaningful activities.
4. utilizes understanding of the impact of various disabilities on student academic, behavioral and/or social development in planning instruction.
5. adapts content and activities to build upon the learner's intellectual, physical, sensory, communication and emotional abilities.
6. uses research-based practices to support areas of need based on knowledge of individual students' strengths.
7. develops significant opportunities to model, rehearse and develop social skills necessary to participate in the community.
8. designs individualized educational plans individualized education program focusing on incremental growth.
9. plans for skill development leading to desired, quality adult life options.
10. plans for student choice based on learning styles and abilities.
11. ensures that materials and activities are meaningful and purposeful to the content and to the learner's identified strengths and needs.
12. designs instruction that links new ideas with the learner's prior knowledge and experiences.
13. relates levels of support to the needs of the student.
14. *demonstrates an ability to design, sequence, implement, and evaluate modifications for daily living skills which provide for independence for students who are blind and have low vision.*

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. knows students as individuals and is aware of the influence of their previous experiences, family, culture, and learning profiles.
2. is aware of the communicative, intellectual, physical, and emotional abilities of each student.

3. is knowledgeable of family expectations of and for the learner.
4. knows research-based practices to address the unique learning styles of individuals.
5. knows a variety of resources/materials/activities matched to students' learning styles, strengths and needs to enhance skill development.
6. knows the potential impact of various disabilities on learning.
7. understands that the dispositions and actions of educators affect the learning, behavior and self-esteem of the learner.
8. understands the impact of sensory and environmental stimuli on learning.
9. *knows how to assist students in developing alternative organizational, reasoning, decision-making, and study skills.*
10. *understands the impact of co-existing exceptionalities on individuals who are blind or have low vision.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. is enthusiastic about each learner's gifts and talents.
2. values knowing learners as individuals and appreciates their unique learning styles and strengths.
3. values and respects the diversity of students in planning learning activities.
4. values and respects the role of students as partners in making choices about their learning.
5. values and respects the uniqueness of families and the impact of diverse cultural perspectives on education and disabilities.
6. *respects the effect a visual impairment has on the family and the reciprocal impact on the individual.*

**Standard #4: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs possesses a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies and knowledge of technology, and selects, adapts, and uses these strategies and technologies to promote positive learning results.**

## **Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. utilizes the academic standards and the general education curriculum as the basis for student instruction.
2. selects and utilizes appropriate instructional strategies and assistive technologies to address the strengths and needs of learners.
3. teaches students social skills necessary to participate in instructional opportunities.
4. effectively implements individualized educational programs including behavioral intervention plans and transition plans.
5. teaches and remediates basic skills as identified in the individualized educational programs.
6. teaches students to use self-assessment, problem solving, and other cognitive strategies to meet their needs.
7. provides accommodations and modifications to facilitate learning at levels appropriate to the intensity of need.
8. utilizes resources and technologies from local, regional, state, and federal sources.
9. uses strategies to facilitate maintenance and generalization of skills across environments.
10. uses scientifically-based, research-supported instructional methods to teach reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
11. teaches learning strategies, study skills, and test-taking strategies to help students acquire academic content.
12. *teaches, writes, and reads contracted literary braille and Nemeth code and is able to apply interpretation of specialty braille codes when necessary.*
13. *teaches students listening and compensatory auditory skills.*
14. *integrates knowledge of the visual impairment when identifying and infusing low vision devices and strategies into the curriculum, learning environments, and instructional techniques.*
15. *uses effective strategies and techniques when modifying instructional methods and materials for students who are blind and have low vision.*

16. *identifies and designs instructional experiences contingent upon student and familial stages of acceptance of the visual impairment.*

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. knows the academic standards and general education curriculum appropriate to the grade levels, content areas, and developmental levels of students.
2. knows competing theories for teaching reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
3. knows a variety of instructional strategies, accommodations, modifications, assistive technologies, and resources to support the unique needs of learners.
4. knows learning strategies, study skills, and test-taking strategies based on the individualized education program.
5. *possesses in-depth knowledge of methods, materials, and assistive equipment for providing for the development of auditory, tactual, and communication skills.*
6. *knows how to use a braille writer, slate and stylus, and computer technology to produce braille materials.*
7. *knows how to teach handwriting and signature skills to individuals who are blind or have low vision.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. believes that all students can learn when given appropriate instructional support.
2. values high expectations for all learners.
3. values designing and implementing the least intrusive strategies to support student learning.
4. *respects student and familial acknowledgment of the visual impairment.*

## **Standard #5: LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs is cognizant of the importance of active learning environments and collaboratively designs settings that foster an enriching, nurturing, and safe climate where diversity and risk taking are valued.**

### **Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. creates a safe, equitable, positive and supportive learning environment in which diversity is valued.
2. identifies realistic expectations for personal and social behavior in various settings.
3. identifies supports needed for inclusion in various settings.
4. designs learning environments that encourage active participation in individual and group activities.
5. modifies the learning environment to manage behaviors.
6. uses performance data and information from all stakeholders to make or suggest modifications in learning environments.
7. establishes and maintains rapport with colleagues, students, and families.
8. models and teaches self-advocacy skills to increase independence.
9. uses effective, varied, and least intensive behavior management strategies consistent with the needs of students.
10. designs and manages daily routines.
11. organizes, develops, and sustains learning experiences that support positive intercultural and intracultural experiences.
12. mediates conflicts among students.
13. structures, directs, and supports the activities of paraeducators, volunteers, and tutors.
14. uses universal precautions when caring for the health needs of students.
15. plans instruction for one-on-one, small-group, large-group, and co-teaching settings.
16. *implements integrated learning experiences which are multi-sensory and encourage active participation, self-advocacy, and independence.*



17. *uses evidence-based, research-supported instructional methods to teach reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.*
18. *teaches learning strategies, study skills, and test-taking strategies to help students acquire academic content.*

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. understands the demands of learning environments.
2. understands research-based classroom management theories and strategies.
3. understands how teacher dispositions and behaviors influence students.
4. understands the impact of cultural differences on student interactions.
5. knows strategies for crisis prevention and intervention.
6. knows guidelines for universal precautions.
7. knows strategies for preparing individuals to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world.
8. understands ways to create learning environments that allow individuals to retain and appreciate their own and each others' respective language and cultural heritage.
9. is aware of ways of adapting the physical environment to support individual learning needs.
10. knows methods for ensuring individual academic success in one-on-one, small-group, large-group, and co-teaching settings.
11. know a variety of approaches to design positive learning environments.
12. *knows strategies for creating learning environments that encourage self-advocacy and independence.*
13. *knows how to assist the student in developing visual, auditory, and tactile efficiency, as well as pre-cane mobility skills.*
14. *understands the need to establish proper posture, communication, and social skills.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. appreciates the uniqueness of each learner.
2. accepts responsibility for educating the whole child in a positive environment.
3. values and respects the diversity of students in planning learning activities
4. values and respects the role of students as partners in making choices about their learning.
5. appreciates the value of humor, play, and enjoyment in the learning environment.
6. *appreciates the importance of providing students with a means to independently access and re-create materials readily available to the sighted world.*
7. *respects the need for student and familial interactions with role models who have a visual impairment.*

#### **Standard #6: COMMUNICATION**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs understands typical and atypical language development and uses individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills.**

##### **Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. recognizes typical and atypical language development.
2. uses a variety of strategies to support and enhance communication skills.
3. uses augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication skills.
4. uses communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for students whose primary language is not English.
5. supports students in understanding that communication may be interpreted in a variety of ways.
6. *uses a variety of strategies to teach nonverbal and alternative communication skills based on the individual needs of the students.*
7. *prepares individuals to respond constructively to societal attitudes and actions.*

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. understands the developmental nature of communication skills needed for participation in community and educational environments.
2. understands the effects of cultural and linguistic differences on growth and development.
3. understands how one's own culture and use of language may differ from others, create barriers, or lead to misunderstanding.
4. understands the impact of students' communication skills on quality of life.
5. is familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication.
6. understands the impact of communication skill deficits on academic and non-academic achievement.
7. *knows how to critique and evaluate the strengths and limitations of various types of assistive technologies.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. respects individual differences in communication styles.
2. appreciates the impact of one's own communication skills on students' learning.
3. is committed to supporting students in their use of low- and high-tech communication devices and strategies.

**Standard #7: INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs understands that individualized planning is at the center of special education practice.**

**Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. develops individualized education programs including goals, objectives, and benchmarks based on learners' abilities, needs, prior knowledge, cultural background, and curriculum standards.

2. writes goals which are observable and measurable.
3. prepares appropriate lesson plans informed by learners' abilities and needs, curriculum standards, learning theory, and research-based best practice.
4. plans for appropriate adaptations of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to address learners' intellectual, physical, and emotional abilities.
5. utilizes knowledge of community and school resources in designing relevant learning opportunities which transfer to the individual learner's current and future life.
6. utilizes knowledge of learners' families to support realistic expectations of students.
7. creates activities that enable students to develop intellectual curiosity and become problem solvers and lifelong learners.
8. adjusts instructional plans based on results of continuous assessment.
9. plans with colleagues and families for successful transitions for learners.
10. plans for the effective use of support personnel to promote student learning and well-being.
11. uses functional behavioral assessments to develop behavioral intervention plans.
12. plans for the transfer of skills from educational to real-life settings.
13. selects and designs technology, materials, and resources to meet student needs.
14. integrates academic instruction, affective education and behavior management.
15. provides instruction on the use of alternative and augmentative communication
16. *sequences, implements, and evaluates learning objectives based on the state academic standards and the expanded core curriculum for individuals with blind or have low vision.*
17. *ensures implementation of instructional goals by securing specialized materials and equipment in a timely manner.*

### **Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. knows learning theory and research-based best practices that form the basis of curriculum development and instruction for learners with typical and exceptional needs.

2. understands the legal requirements, policies and procedures for completing appropriate Individualized Educational Plans.
3. is familiar with state academic standards for students.
4. understands the importance of prior knowledge, cultural background, family expectations, and learning styles when planning for individual students.
5. knows the roles and responsibilities of support personnel related to instruction.
6. understands the transition planning process.
7. *understands the relationships among assessments, IEP development, and service delivery as they pertain to vision programs.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. believes that effective planning is essential to providing appropriate instruction.
2. values the availability of the full continuum of placement options based on the student's communication needs.

**Standard #8 ASSESSMENT**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs is competent in selecting, administering, and interpreting a variety of formal and informal assessment tools and utilizes this information to design, implement, and evaluate instruction and to guide students in self-assessment.**

**Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. engages in ongoing assessment by administering formal and informal assessment procedures appropriately.
2. interprets and applies information obtained from both formal and informal assessment.
3. uses a variety of data collection tools and techniques specific to student needs to complete a functional behavioral assessment.
4. utilizes functional behavioral assessments to design positive behavioral interventions and supports.
5. collaborates effectively with all parties involved in the assessment process.

6. communicates assessment results effectively to all involved parties.
7. collects and maintains accurate assessment data.
8. prepares students and family members to be effective participants in the assessment process.
9. assesses the use of technology, materials, and resources appropriate to the abilities, desires and anticipated outcomes of the individual.
10. teaches students to utilize assessment data and self-assessments to become more effective learners.
11. implements recommended and permissible accommodations and modifications in individual and group assessment.
12. selects, adapts and uses assessment tools and methods to address the abilities and needs of the student.
13. *conducts alternative as well as functional evaluations of visual, literary, pre-cane mobility, and educational performance.*
14. *uses information obtained through functional, alternative, and standardized assessments to plan, deliver, and modify instructional and environmental factors.*
15. *interprets eye reports and other vision-related diagnostic information.*

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. knows basic terminology used in assessment.
2. knows the legal process and ethical obligations related to the assessment process.
3. understands the basic concepts of measurement.
4. is familiar with a variety of instruments and procedures used to assess students' abilities, attitudes, interests, and performance.
5. understands the rationale for and processes involved in completing a functional behavioral assessment.
6. recognizes the limitations of assessment instruments.
7. knows screening, pre-referral, referral, and classification procedures.
8. knows that the purpose of ongoing assessment is to inform teaching.

9. recognizes how environmental conditions impact the assessment process.
10. knows recommended and permissible assessment accommodations and modifications in individual and group assessment.
11. understands the issues involved in identifying students with exceptional needs including the needs of individuals and families from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
12. knows eligibility requirements for student participation in state mandated assessment.
13. *possesses in-depth knowledge of procedures for adapting and administering assessments for intervention, referral, and identification of students who are blind or have low vision.*

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. respects the legal provisions and guidelines involved in student assessment.
2. values the rights and involvement of students and parents in the assessment process.
3. values accuracy and timeliness in selecting, administering, interpreting, and reporting results of assessment.
4. values the confidentiality of assessment information.
5. respects the input from related service personnel, para-educators, and other school staff in the assessment process.
6. *is sensitive to familial acceptance of the vision loss throughout the referral and assessment process.*

**Standard #9: PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs understands reflective and ethical practices and the importance of ongoing professional development to promote student growth.**

**Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. complies with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Code of Ethics and other professional codes of practice.

2. upholds high standards of competence and integrity and exercises sound judgment in the practice of the profession.
3. acts ethically in advocating for appropriate services.
4. conducts professional activities in compliance with applicable laws and policies.
5. demonstrates sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, disability, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation of students and families.
6. practices within one's skill limit and obtains information or assistance as needed.
7. reflects on one's practice to improve instruction and guide professional growth.
8. participates in professional activities and organizations that benefit individuals with exceptional needs, their families, and one's colleagues.
9. engages in and promotes colleagues' participation in research and incorporates this research into daily practice.
10. uses available and innovative resources and technologies to enhance personal productivity and efficiency.
11. utilizes methods to remain current regarding research-based practices.
12. maintains student, familial, and collegial confidentiality.

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. understands how personal cultural biases and differences affect one's teaching and learning.
2. is aware of professional organizations relevant to practice.
3. is aware of the Indiana Professional Standards Board professional growth plan process and implications for lifelong learning.
4. understands that the needs and well-being of the student drive all decision making.
5. knows research-based instructional practices.
6. *is familiar with specific services, networks, organizations, and publications for individuals who are blind or have low vision.*



**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. believes that effective self-assessment and reflection on daily practice form the basis for decisions about programs and instructional strategies .
2. values the importance of research in improving the practice of teaching.
3. believes that professional growth is the practitioner's responsibility.
4. respects the legal and ethical issues regarding confidentiality.
5. appreciates the effect of personal assumptions, values, and beliefs on teaching practice.
6. embodies the characteristics of a competent, caring, and qualified educator.
7. is committed to developing best practices that promote desired quality-of-life outcomes for students.

**Standard #10: COLLABORATION**

**The educator of students with exceptional needs collaborates with families, colleagues, related service providers, and community members in culturally responsive ways to support students' learning.**

**Performances:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. communicates effectively in verbal, non-verbal, and written modes.
2. initiates, establishes and supports direct, on-going relationships with parents.
3. collaborates with families to define expectations and establish goals and quality life outcomes.
4. establishes plans for regular, meaningful communication between home and school.
5. establishes purposeful, on-going communication with other teachers and related service personnel to coordinate services.
6. participates in multidisciplinary teams to provide integrated services
7. ensures that all parties are informed of goals, outcomes, behavior plans, changes in status or medications, conferences/meetings, and other related issues.

8. identifies community agencies that offer quality services to individuals with exceptional needs.
9. plans and collaborates with community agencies, families and professionals to facilitate smooth transitions.
10. supports families in meeting timelines, understanding processes and advocating for needed services from community agencies.
11. uses conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem solving to enhance collaboration.
12. collaborates, advocates for and facilitates the implementation of appropriate curricular adaptations.
13. seeks out innovative resources and technologies from local, regional, state, and federal sources to support the needs of students and families.
14. uses available and innovative resources and technologies to enhance personal productivity and efficiency.
15. selects, plans, and coordinates activities of paraprofessionals and all other support personnel involved in implementation of students' individualized education program.
16. *communicates information from the optometrist/ophthalmologist report to ensure the educational implications of the eye condition and the student's visual strengths are utilized.*

**Knowledge:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. knows the elements of effective communication.
2. understands various models of collaborative teaching.
3. knows how to develop and implement individualized educational program as part of a collaborative team.
4. is aware of a wide variety of community resources and knows how to access services to support student needs.
5. is aware of the programs and services available in school and community environment.
6. knows how to make appropriate referrals for services provided by school districts, and community and state agencies.
7. is familiar with parent education programs and resources.

8. knows the roles and responsibilities of professional groups and referral agencies in identifying, assessing, and providing services to students.

**Dispositions:**

*The educator of students with exceptional needs:*

1. values collaborative relationships.
2. respects the dignity and privacy of students and families.
3. values parents as full partners in educational planning.
4. values the role of stakeholders in the design, implementation and review of individualized educational plans.
5. respects the constraints of community agencies.
6. is receptive to new ideas that enhance student learning.